

New DNR Webpage Now Available: Locating Wetlands

In late 2005, Department Staff became aware of a wetland violation located in Kewaunee County. A property owner had filled a portion of a valuable cedar swamp wetland for the purpose of creating a large garage. The NER Water Management Specialist investigated the violation and determined that the project did not meet the state laws and is in the process of pursuing enforcement actions with the Department of Justice.

Go here to access the New "Locating Wetlands Site"
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/fhp/wetlands/locating.shtml>

The property owner in question stated that he had no idea that the property was wetland. The property owner received a building permit from the Town and felt that they had acquired the necessary approvals to build their project. This violation and the pending Department enforcement action caused great concern among representatives in the area. One of the legislators created a Senate Select Committee to investigate Department actions. The Committee held hearings around the state soliciting input on Department decisions and interactions with the public; hearings were difficult and it became clear that DNR needed to provide good tools to inform the public of its available information to discourage these situations in the future.

All parties involved agreed that we need better access and information on the locations of wetlands. Regional Aquatic Habitat Coordinator Kristy Rogers and Water Resources Management Specialist Julia Wilcox created the "Locating Wetlands Webpage", which brings together existing tools and information to help people determine if their property of interest contains wetlands. The page has links to the state's new "[Surface Water Data Viewer](#)", local wetland maps, soils maps, and also contains "on the ground" clues of wetlands like types of vegetation and evidence of standing water.

In addition, Senator Mark Miller is working on a legislative solution that would require disclosure of wetland information with the sale of property. The purpose of this measure would be to ensure that property buyers are aware of wetland areas on the property they are purchasing before it is purchased.